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The Problem in Training Staff Officers
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In the article by General-Mayor S. Bashuk and Colonel M. Fedulov* extremely urgent questions are raised concerning providing staffs with operations officers capable of taking an active part in troop control under complex modern conditions.

While on the whole we share the authors' positions, we would like at the same time to emphasize that the given problem should be considered on a broader plane. The appropriate training not only for operations officers, but also for all officers of directorates, departments, and services of the field headquarters of the formation (large unit) should be discussed. This is made necessary by the growing role of the branch arms and special troops, the enormous responsibility of each officer for carrying out his functional duties, and the complexity of the tasks he is assigned, regardless of what level of the field headquarters he is working in.

Nuclear weapons and other means of armed combat have caused profound changes in the nature and methods of troop actions. To comprehend this, and to creatively develop and skilfully apply this in practice, is a most important and extremely difficult task for officers of directorates, departments, and services. As is known, the staff is the brain of a large and highly complex military organism. It can successfully carry out its work only if each of its component parts is able to continuously and with a high level of effectiveness perform the duties for which it is responsible. To do so a staff officer must be well trained, and must have the knowledge and solid skills called for by his position in the service.

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As a result of the employment of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, during a modern battle or operation there may be mass losses of troops and staffs, and control of units and large units may be disrupted. Therefore an officer of the appropriate staff should be prepared, when necessary, to assume full responsibility for the control of a unit or large unit and, in exceptional cases, of an operational formation, and to skilfully handle these functions in the battle (operation) that up to then had been performed by his formation (large unit) commander or chief. This requirement applies to the greatest extent to operations officers, missilemen, artillerymen, and air defense officers.

When solving the problem of training staff officers, we must not forget that officers who had been fulfilling other functional duties are brought in to man the many departments and directorates that have a reduced T/O in peacetime. It is quite clear that they should receive appropriate training in advance.

Much has already been done to solve this problem, but far from everything or everywhere. As Comrades Bashuk and Fedulov correctly point out in their article, in the division staffs one often encounters officers whose education goes only as far as the military school and whose work experience is limited to the company and battalion. There are officers serving in the key departments of the staff of the army and the military district who have graduated from the academies i/n M. V. Frunze, i/n R. Ya. Malinovskiy and the equivalent, where they gain a general familiarity with operational art, i.e., they merely take a lecture course and perform a few tasks at the army level. Front operations are not studied in these academies, and the officer graduates have an extremely superficial understanding of them.

Some comrades believe that this shortcoming can be compensated for either by independent work or by the officer training system. However, as experience demonstrates, neither provides the necessary systematized body of knowledge on such complex questions. Because of their extremely large current work load, officers usually lack time to study them thoroughly and in depth.

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Why are staffs in such a state? In our opinion, this is because first, the higher military educational institutions do

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not turn out enough graduates to man all the posts that should be filled by officers with a higher military education, and secondly, because mistakes are made in personnel placement.

Many years of experience demonstrate that graduates of the academies i/n M. V. Frunze and i/n R. Ya. Malinovskiy and of the command faculties of other military academies try to get the position of battalion commander since the authorized rank of a battalion commander is lieutenant colonel, and if the command is successful, promotion is guaranteed. Officers are well aware of this and, as a rule, do not display enthusiasm when assigned to staff officer posts where the authorized ranks are lower and promotion is less likely.

On the other hand, staff officers are fairly timid about moving to command positions, and it is often felt that they are "cut off" from the troops. Also, there are known cases of efforts being made to keep the most capable officers in the staff and to send less prepared officers as quickly as possible to some kind of courses giving retraining and then into the troops, where they advance through the service ranks fairly rapidly, although they continue to be "average performers". And capable, promising, and even gifted officers are not always given effective aid, far from it. Not enough active measures are taken to develop their capabilities and natural gifts. Thus, the level ends up below that of the "average performer".

Having weighed all these factors, we believe it necessary to regulate more precisely the service career of officers with a higher military education and to more accurately coordinate the service status of officers of command and staff posts. An adopted regulation on the rotation of service in command and staff posts should be introduced into the system. Obviously, it is nevertheless more advisable that officers who have graduated from higher military educational institutions be assigned to fill staff positions so that the road to the positions of unit and large unit commander inevitably runs through the staff, and that staff service constitutes a stimulus to further advancement.

The authors of the article propose that courses giving training and retraining be set up at the higher military educational institutions for officers of operations sections, departments, and directorates. In our opinion, the proposal

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deserves attention. This is particularly important for training officers of the operations departments of the armies and of the operations directorates of the military districts. There are already such courses at the Academy of the General Staff, but they are designed for command personnel only. Expanding the category of students by bringing in officers who have previously graduated from command academies and received operational training at the army level would make it possible to substantially increase the number of operations officers (reconnaissance officers, missilemen-artillerymen, etc.) who have thoroughly mastered the basic principles of conducting front and strategic operations. During the training period, they could improve their knowledge on a number of specific matters of staff service and also familiarize themselves with the employment of automated control systems in the control organs.

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